A U M

Look within. Within is the fountain of the good, and it will ever bubble up, if thou wilt ever dig. —MARCUS AURELIUS.

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THE ULTIMATE TASK

EVERY event passes slowly from the potential through the conditional to the inevitable. Long before it becomes physically manifest it has become unavoidable. The crisis of this nation, as of the world, lay in seed in ages incredible to modern short-sighted humanity; some months or some years ago, the latitude of choice was absorbed into the forces already set in motion. Karma must now run its course. Within narrow limits, the individual may "guide and direct some of the minor currents" of the visible scene, but his real choices can now only be spiritual, not physical.

No studious Theosophist who has learned for himself the reliability of his Teachers can have been taken very much by surprise, either recently or during past years. Prophecies and prophetic hints from H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge abounded during the last quarter of last century, the time of ostensible "peace and good will to man." There is no need to advert to them in detail; true students know them.

Nor is there any need to point out to Theosophists that, whatever the latest series of maneuvers leading to the cataclysm, its direct spiritual causes have been five thousand years of perversions of religion on the one hand, and the deadly evangel of materialism on the other. Hæckel, not Hitler, is the true betrayer of the German soul; the corruption of the Japanese spirit was not from present chiefs, but from Western imperialism and commercialism, which progressively polluted it during the past decades.

The "muddy torrents of Kama Loka," with which the "astral light" has been cumulatively charged by collective human wickedness for many millenniums past, have burst full upon our boasted "Western Civilization" and "Western Progress," of whose institutions in their present form little indeed will survive.

Theosophists of America are not only Theosophists, but Americans, sharers of the Karma of their race. Regardless of personal desires, they will be involved, voluntarily or involuntarily, in some phase of the immediate task that has been undertaken by the United States; they may voluntarily take part in the ultimate task, to solve the problems which have led to the present condition, and which cannot be solved by war. The immediate task will be guided by personal Karma and the constituted authorities of the land.

The nation will not fall; its time is not yet. The real perils lie within and beyond. Under the good-natured, careless mask of the American has slept the terrible warrior of our Atlantean days; the world is about to see his countenance. Let us beware, lest in a later and calmer day we find ourselves heirs to a mirror, individually and collectively, that shall become a thing of horror to look upon.

If the ultimate task is to be accomplished, if the world is to avoid a return to the sordid helplessness of the Dark Ages, then the work of the Movement must proceed, whatever the difficulties, with increased and redoubled energy and loyalty; else indeed the foundations of civilization will be swept away with the doomed superstructure.

Excuses for staying from meetings, for failure to study, for "slacking off" from personal sacrifice in the application of Theosophical principles, have always been easy to find. They will be still more easily found during the future, which will be a time of sifting and sorting such as the Movement has never yet undergone. Let him who allows the "roar of the world's illusion" to draw him from spiritual duty beware, lest that illusion be his portion of evolution henceforth.

Pending the passing of the immediate storm, there will be many a task of help and construction, of protection and mercy, that may be performed above and beyond duties prescribed by the nation; and in these Theosophists will not be alone. Nor will they be as alone—not nearly as alone as they may think—in understanding of the wider and ultimate issues. Let us hold the road with unbreakable determination, and the end will see many other companions who have not yet joined hands with us. But should the path be deserted, the work broken, who knows what ages must elapse before any light, save that of recurrent false dawns, shall be seen again? Let every man remain at his spiritual post, lest darkness fall.

CYCLIC IMPRESSION AND RETURN AND OUR EVOLUTION

[This lecture was delivered by William Q. Judge before the Convention of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, April 25, 1892.—Editors, THEOSOPHY.]

MR. Chairman, Fellow Theosophists, Ladies and Gentlemen: The title of what I am about to say to you is CYCLIC IMPRESSION AND RETURN AND OUR EVOLUTION. Now what is a cycle? It has nothing to do with the word psychic, and I am sorry to have to say that, because I heard some people this morning repeat the title as "psychic" instead of "cyclic," seeming to think perhaps that that was the same thing, or had some relation to it. The word cyclic is derived from the Greek word *Kuklos,* or a ring. It has been turned in the English language into the word cycle, by the process of saying Kykle, and then cycle. The corresponding word in the Sanscrit is *Kalpa,* which has in fact a wider and a deeper meaning; because cycle in English is a word which covers, is used for, and thus somewhat confuses, many cycles. It is used for the small cycles, and the larger cycles, the intermediate cycles and the great ones, whereas the word *Kalpa* means and implies only one cycle of a large size, and the smaller cycles within that are designated by other words.

What is a cycle? It is a circle, a ring. But not properly a ring like a wedding ring, which runs into itself, but more properly like a screw thread, which takes the form of a spiral, and thus beginning at the bottom, turns on itself, and goes up. It is something like the great Horseshoe Curve in the Pennsylvania Railroad. There you go around the curve at the lower end; you go down into the horseshoe, and as you turn the grade rises, so that when you arrive at the opposite side you have gotten no further than the beginning, but you have risen just the distance between the two ends of the grade.

But what do we mean by a cycle in Theosophy, in our own investigations of nature, or man, or civilization, or our own development, our own origin, our own destiny? We mean by cycles, just what the Egyptians, the Hindoos and the philosophers of the Middle Ages meant by it; that is, that there is a periodical return or cycling back, circling back of something from some place once more. That is why it is called cycle, inasmuch as it returns upon itself, seemingly; but in the Theosophical doctrine, and in the ancient doctrines, it is always a little higher in the sense of perfection or progress. That is to say, as the Egyptians held, cycles prevail everywhere, things come back

again, events return, history comes back, and so in this century we have the saying: "History repeats itself."

But where do Theosophists say that cyclic law prevails? We say that it prevails everywhere. It prevails in every kingdom of nature, in the animal kingdom, the mineral world, the human world; in history, in the sky, on the earth. We say that not only do cycles pertain, and appertain, and obtain in and to the earth and its inhabitants, but also in what the Hindoos call the three kingdoms of the universe, the three worlds; that is, that below us, ourselves, and that above.

Now, if you will turn to Buckle, a great writer of the English school, you will find him saying in one of his standard books, a great book often quoted, that there is no doubt cyclic law prevails in regard to nations, that they have come back apparently the same, only slightly improved or degraded, for there is also a downward cycle included within those that rise; but Buckle did not discover a law. He simply once more stated what the ancients had said over and over again. And it has always seemed to me that if Buckle and other people of that kind would pay a little more attention to the ancients, they would save themselves a great deal of trouble, for he obtained his law by much delving, much painstaking labor, whereas he might have gotten the law if he had consulted the ancients, who always taught that there were cycles, and that there always will be cycles.

Among the ancients they had a great many large and important cycles. In their classification they had a Saros and a Naros, which are not understood today by us. They are known to some extent, but what exactly they are, we do not know. The Egyptians taught that there was a great sidereal cycle, and that is recognized today, at last; that is the cycle of 25,000 years, the great one caused by the fact that the sun went through the signs of the Zodiac in that length of time. Now, I do not assume that you know nothing about astronomy, but in order to make it clear, it will be better for me to state this over again, just as it is. The sun goes through the signs of the Zodiac from day to day and from year to year, but at the same time, in going through the signs of the Zodiac, he goes back slowly, like the hands of a clock ticking off the time. In going through that period he comes back to the same point again, and retards himself, or goes back; that is called the precession of the equinoxes, and it is so many seconds in such a length of time. Those seconds in the sky turned into time show you that the sun takes 25,000 and odd years to come back to the place from which he started out at any particular time; that is to say, if you imagine that on the first of April, this year, the sun was in such a degree of Aries, one of the signs of the Zodiac, he will not get

back to that sign by the precession of the equinoxes until 25,000 years have passed away.

Now, the sun is the center of our solar system and the earth revolves around it, and as the earth revolves she turns upon her axis. The sun, it is known now by astronomers, as it was known by the ancients (who were ourselves in fact), revolves around a center. That is, that while we are going around the sun, he is going around some other center, so that we describe in the sky not a circle around the sun, but a spiral, as we move with the sun around his enormous orbit. Now do you grasp that idea exactly? It is a very important one, for it opens up the subject to a very large extent. There is a star somewhere in the sky, we do not know where—some think it is Alcyone, or some other star, some think it may be a star in the Pleiades, and some others think it is a star somewhere else—but they know by deduction from the known to the unknown, as Brother Thomas told you this morning, that the sun is attracted himself by some unknown center, and that he turns around it in an enormous circle, and as he turns, of course he draws the earth with him. In the course of 25,000 years in going around the signs of the Zodiac, he must take the earth into spaces where it has never yet been, for when he reaches this point in Aries, after 25,000 years, it is only apparently the same point, just as when I came around the curve of the Horseshoe, I started around the first point and went around the curve, came back to the same point, but I was higher up; I was in another position. And so, when the sun gets back again to the point in Aries, where he was on the first of April this year, he will not be in the exact position in the universe of space, but he will be somewhere else, and in his journey of 25,000 years through billions upon billions of miles, he draws the earth into spaces where she never was before, and never will be as that earth again. He must draw her into cosmic spaces where things are different, and thus cause changes in the earth itself, for changes in cosmic matter in the atmosphere, in the space where the sun draws the earth, must affect the earth and all its inhabitants. The ancients investigated this subject, and declared long ago this 25,000 years cycle, but it is only just lately, so to speak, that we are beginning to say we have discovered this. We know, as Nineteenth century astronomers, that it is a fact, or that it must be a fact, from deduction, but they knew it was a fact because they had observed it themselves and recorded the observations.

The Egyptians had also the cycle of the Moon, which we know, and they had more cycles of the moon than we have, for the moon not only has her cycle of twenty-eight days, when she changes from

full to disappearance, and then again to youth, but she also has a period of return somewhere over fourteen years, which must itself have its effect upon the earth.

Then they said, also, that the human soul had its cycles, it being 5,000 years. That is, the man died, or the king died, and his body was turned into a mummy in the hope that when, after his five thousand years cycle had elapsed and he came back once more to earth, he would find his mummy there? No; but that no one else should have taken his mummied atoms and made a bad use of them. Mummification is explained by us in another way. Their knowledge of the law of cycles caused them to make the first mummy. They held that a human soul returned; they also held that all atoms are alive, just as we do; that they are sensitive points; that they have intelligence belonging to the plane on which they are, and that the man who misuses atoms of matter, such as you have in your bodies and your brains, must stand the consequences. Consequently, saying that to themselves, they said, "If I die, and leave those atoms, which I have used so well, perhaps some other man will take them and use them badly, so I will preserve them as far as possible until I return, and then by a process destroy the combination of atoms, absorb them into some place, or position, where they might be put to good use." That may seem offensive to some today, but I am merely repeating the theory, I am not saying whether I believe it or not.

The ancient Egyptians who held these theories have disappeared and left nothing behind but the pyramids, the temples of Thebes, the Sphinxes and all the great monuments which are slowly being discovered by us. Where have they gone? Have they come back? Do the Copts now in Egypt represent them? I think not, although heredity is the boasted explanation of everything. The Copts are their descendants? They know nothing, absolutely nothing but a simple language, and they live the life of slaves, and yet they are the descendants of the ancient Egyptians! What has become of them? The ancient Egyptians we think were co-laborers with the ancient Hindoos, whose cycle remains; that is to say, whose descendants remain, holding the knowledge, in part, of their fore-fathers, and we find that the Hindoos have held always the same theories as to cycles as the Egyptians held. They divided the ages of the world. They say manifestation begins, and then it lasts for a period called a Kalpa, an enormous number of years; that Kalpa is divided into ages. The small cycle is composed of a large number of years; one will be four thousand, another four hundred thousand, another will be a million, and so on, making a total which we cannot grasp with the mind but which we can write upon the paper.

Now, the idea of cycles came from the Hindoos, through the nations who spread out from there, for it is admitted that the land of Hindustan is the cradle of the race. The Aryan race came down into Christendom, so that we find the Christians, the Romans, the Greeks and all people around that time holding the same theories as to cycles; that is, that cyclic law prevails everywhere. We find it in the ancient mystics, the Christian mystics, the middle age mystics and the mystics of times nearer to ours.

If you will read the works of Higgins, who wrote the Anacalypsis, you will find there laborious compilations and investigations on the subject of the cycles. Do they obtain? Is there such a thing as a cycle which affects human destiny?

Coming closer to our own personal life, we can see that cycles do and must prevail, for the sun rises in the morning and goes to the center of the sky, descends in the west; the next day he does the same thing, and following him, you rise. You come to the highest point of your activity, and you go to sleep. So day follows night and night follows day. Those are cycles, small cycles, but they go to make the greater ones. You were born, at about seven years of age you began to get discretion to some extent. A little longer and you reach manhood, then you begin to fall, and at last you finish the great day of your life when body dies.

In looking at nature we also find that there are summer and winter, spring and autumn. These are cycles, and every one of them affects the earth, with the human beings upon it.

The esoteric doctrine that Brother Mead has been talking about, the inner doctrine of the old theosophists and the present day theosophists, to be found in every old literature and religious book, is that cyclic law is the supreme law governing our evolution; that reincarnation, which we talk so much about, is cyclic law in operation and is supreme. For what is reincarnation but a coming back again to life, just what the ancient Egyptians taught and which we are finding out to be probably true, for in no other way than by this cyclic law of reincarnation can we account for the problems of life that beset us; with this we account for our own character, each one different from the other, and with a force peculiar to each person.

This being the supreme law, we have to consider another one, which is related to it and contained in the title I have adopted. That is the law of the return of impressions. What do we mean by that? I mean, those acts and thoughts performed by a nation—not speaking about the things that affect nature, although it is governed by the same law—constitute an impression. That is to say, your coming to this convention creates in your nature an impression. Your going into

the street and seeing a street brawl creates an impression. Your having a quarrel last week and denouncing a man, or with a woman and getting very angry, creates an impression in you, and that impression is as much subject to cyclic law as the moon, and the stars, and the world, and is far more important in respect to your development—your personal development or evolution—than all these other great things, for they affect you in the mass, whereas these little ones affect you in detail.

This Theosophical doctrine in respect to cycles, and the evolution of the human race, I think is known to you all, for I am assuming that you are all theosophists.

It is to be described somewhat in this way: Imagine that before this earth came out of the gaseous condition there existed an earth somewhere in space, let us call it the moon, for that is the exact theory. The moon was once a large and vital body full of beings. It lived its life, went through its cycles, and at last having lived its life, after vast ages had passed away, came to the moment when it had to die; that is, the moment came when the beings on that earth had to leave it, because its period had elapsed, and then began from that earth the exodus. You can imagine it as a flight of birds migrating. Did you ever see birds migrate? I have seen them migrate in a manner that perhaps not many of you have. In Ireland, and perhaps in England, the swallows migrate in a manner very peculiar. When I was a boy, I used to go to my uncle's place where there was an old mass of stone ruins at the end of the garden, and by some peculiar combination of circumstances the swallows of the whole neighboring counties collected there. The way they gathered there was this: When the period arrived, you could see them coming in all parts of the sky, and they would settle down and twitter on this pile of stone all day, and fly about. When the evening came—twilight—they raised in a body and formed an enormous circle. It must have been over forty feet in diameter, and that circle of swallows flew around in the sky, around this tower, around and around for an hour or two, making a loud twittering noise, and that attracted from other places swallows who had probably forgotten the occasion. They kept that up for several days, until one day the period arrived when they must go, and they went away—some were left behind, some came a little early, and some came too late. Other birds migrate in other ways. And so these human birds migrated from the moon to this spot where the earth began (I don't know where it is—a spot in space—) and settled down as living beings, entities, not with bodies, but beings, in that mass of matter, at that point in space, informed it with life, and

at last caused this earth to become a ball with beings upon it. And then cycles began to prevail, for the impressions made upon these fathers when they lived in the ancient—mind fails to think how ancient—civilization of the moon, came back again when they got to this earth, and so we find the races of the earth rising up and falling, rising again and falling, rising and falling, and at last coming to what they are now, which is nothing to what they will be, for they go ever higher and higher. That is the theory, broadly, and in that is included the theory of the races, the great seven races who inhabited the earth successively, the great seven Adams who peopled the earth; and at last when this earth shall come to its time of life, its period, all the beings on it will fly away from it to some other spot in space to evolve new worlds as elder brothers who have done the same thing before in other spaces in nature. We are not doing this blindly. It has been done before by others—no one knows when it began. It had nothing in the way of a beginning, it will have no end, but there are always elder brothers of the race, who live on. As some have written, we cannot turn back the cycles in their course. The fire of patriotism cannot prevail against the higher destiny which will plunge a nation into darkness. All we can do is to change it here and there a little. The elder brothers are subject to law, but they have confidence and hope, because that law merely means that they appear to go down, in order to rise again at a greater height. So that we have come up through the cyclic law from the lowest kingdoms of nature. That is, we are connected in an enormous brotherhood, which includes not only the white people of the earth and the black people of the earth, and the yellow people, but the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the mineral kingdom and the unseen elemental kingdom. You must not be so selfish as to suppose that it includes only men and women. It includes everything, every atom in this solar system. And we come up from lower forms, and are learning how to so mould and fashion, use and abuse, or impress the matter that come into our charge, into our bodies, our brains and our psychical nature, so that that matter shall be an improvement to be used by the younger brothers who are still below us, perhaps in the stone beneath our feet. I do not mean by that that there is a human being in that stone. I mean that every atom in the stone is not dead matter. There is no dead matter anywhere, but every atom in that stone contains a life, unintelligent, formless, but potential, and at some period in time far beyond our comprehension, all of those atoms in that stone will have been released. The matter itself will have been refined, and at last all in this great cycle of progress will have been brought up the steps

of the ladder, in order to let some others lower still in a state we cannot understand come up to them.

That is the real theory. Is that superstition? If you believe the newspapers that is superstition, for they will twist and turn everything you say. Your enemies will say you said there was a man in that stone, and that you have been a stone. You have not been a stone, but the great monad, the pilgrim who came from other worlds has been in every stone, has been in every kingdom, and now has reached the state of man, to show whether he is able to continue being a man, or whether he will once more fall back, like the boy at school who will not learn, into the lowest class.

(To be concluded)

THOUGHT AND ACT

There is a very important thing you should not overlook. Every time you harshly and unmercifully criticise the faults of another, you produce an attraction to yourself of certain quantities of elementals from that person. They fasten themselves upon you and endeavor to find in you a similar state or spot or fault that they have left in the other person. It is as if they left him to serve you at higher wages, so to say.

Then there is the effect of our acts and thoughts upon, not only the portion of the astral light belonging to each of us with its elementals, but upon the whole astral world. If men saw the dreadful pictures imprinted there and constantly throwing down upon us their suggestions to repeat the same acts or thoughts, a millennium might soon draw near. The astral light is, in this sense, the same as a photographer's negative plate, and we are the sensitive paper underneath, on which is being printed the picture. We can see two sorts of pictures for each act. One is the act itself, and the other is the picture of the thoughts and feelings animating those engaged in it. You can therefore see that you may be responsible for many more dreadful pictures than you had supposed. For actions of a simple outward appearance have behind them, very often, the worst of thoughts or desires.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

QUESTIONS ON THE "OCEAN"

QUESTION: To me the *"ipse dixits"* of Chapter I of *The Ocean of Theosophy* seem as dogmatic and arbitrary, *i.e.*, lacking in tangible proof, as many statements of the church. Isn't it simply a question of what kind of supernaturalism?

Answer: It is well to remember that Mr. Judge did not write the *Ocean* to prove Theosophy, but to present it. Statements are made as matters of fact according to Theosophical teachings, not as dogmas to be believed. For the "proofs" which may lead to reasonable belief, attention is directed to evidence assembled by H. P. B. in *Isis* and *The Secret Doctrine.*

Theosophy cannot be justly regarded as a "kind of supernaturalism," since its fundamental tenets oppose the idea that any thing or being is supernatural—that is, outside the province of natural law. However, the inquirer into realms beyond the senses—psychical, mental or ethical—is indeed faced with the choice between different kinds of metaphysics. The difference between Theosophy and orthodox theology is the same difference that exists between Theosophy and Science. Neither Christian believers nor materialists are fully aware of the assumptions implicit in their beliefs, while the Theosophist is made conscious of the intellectual and moral consequences that follow necessarily from Theosophical propositions. This of itself would seem to recommend Theosophy as a firmer ground upon which to stand while endeavoring to penetrate the screen of darkness around man's inner nature.

Unless one is a blind believer in Materialism, he must seek a philosophy of immortality. The inquirer into Theosophy may adopt Theosophical first principles as working hypotheses, subject to his own conscientious proof or disproof.

QUESTION: Is there enough evidence of the right kind to prove the existence of the "Elder Brothers"? That is, could you hope to win your case for their existence in a high court of law, with no more concrete and demonstrable evidence than Mr. Judge offers in Chapter One?

Answer: Every proposition requires its own "right kind of evidence" for proof. The Brownian Movement is not to be discovered by metaphysics, nor is moral excellence revealed by the microscope. H. P. B. and Judge found "evidence of the right kind," *for them,* that Adepts are a fact in nature. Yet they recognized and pointed out that those "proofs" of the existence of Theosophical

adepts which would be acceptable in a court of law could only confuse and deceive. Their actual presence, and demonstration of "miraculous" powers would be demanded, which, if secured, would result in their being "worshipped as Gods by some and hunted as devils by others." "Miracles" only stupefy the understanding; they never explain. The real evidence of higher beings is moral and philosophical in character.

QUESTION: Do the Masters exist in bodies such as ours?

Answer: Every being requires a body, for without matter, spirit is a *non*-entity. The variety of possible bodies must be as infinite as the opportunities for growth of soul. The Theosophical Mahatmas, however, are defined as "perfected" *men,* having developed their inner powers and knowledge to full capacity for this cycle of evolution, with bodies in all outward respects like our own and differing only as a Seneca differs from a Nero.

QUESTION: "Their own reply, published some time ago," etc. (p. 5), seems to imply that under certain conditions they communicate with men. How was it done in this case? Are there concrete, scientifically proved cases of such communication. Mr. Sinnett's statement is not convincing. Or rather, "their reply" as he gives it is not convincing.

Answer: The questioner again seems to assume that such beings would be desirous of winning homage from the masses and of "proving their existence." On the face of it, does not this sound a trifle odd? Their interest is fully occupied in helping those who have learned to help themselves; who, through philosophy, have approached a level of understanding which would permit contact with a higher level of knowledge. As to reputable evidence of precipitated letters, it should be noted that numerous thoughtful minds have been satisfied on this score. Such phenomena, however, are mere incidental episodes in Theosophical history. The moral truths of the philosophy should never be made dependent on these curiosities of occultism. Those whose faith depends upon phenomena belong in the camp of the Spiritualists.

QUESTION: On page 10, Mr. Judge asserts: "We have an irresistible mass of human evidence," etc. How much better it would have been to give some of that evidence in a simple, concrete form, than simply to say it exists. We want to know what the writer knows, and how he knows it.

Answer: "The irresistible mass of evidence," as implied, is the well known testimony of universal tradition—perhaps the most valuable of all testimony on any subject. Would it be possible for the

greatest civilizations of every land to believe in the existence of such higher beings for millenniums, unless there were some reason for such belief? Again the inquirer is referred to *Isis* and *The Secret Doctrine* for source material.

QUESTION: If the Mahatmas can do all the wonderful things ascribed to them, why don't they teach gifted, struggling men to do likewise, and thus alleviate the suffering of humanity by assuring rapid progress to great heights?

Answer: Has the questioner ever tried to "assure the progress" of someone else? If there be Adepts, they, too, must know better. And as to "teaching" the occult arts to representatives of western civilization, there is no better answer than the following, written by one of those wise men with whom these questions deal:

> Shall we devote ourselves to teaching a few Europeans—fed on the fat of the land, many of them loaded with the gifts of blind fortune—the rationale of bell-ringing, of cup-growing, of the spiritual telephone, and astral body formation, and leave the teeming millions of the ignorant, of the poor and oppressed to take care of themselves, and of their hereafter, as best they know how? Never! perish rather the Theosophical Society with both its hapless Founders, than that we should allow it to become no better than an academy of magic, and a hall of Occultism! That we, the devoted followers of that spirit incarnate of absolute self-sacrifice, of philanthropy, divine kindness, as of all the highest virtues attainable on this earth of sorrow, the man of men, Gautama Buddha, should ever allow the Theosophical Society to represent the embodiment of selfishness, the refuge of the few, with no thought in them for the many, is a strange idea, my brothers! (THEOSOPHY X, 71.)

TURN OF THE CYCLE

The despondency of the age is a general tendency, partly personal, partly belonging to the age. It comes in cycles as you will have observed. When it comes the cycle will have reached its lowest point. Knowing this we begin to lift up that cycle, by rising quickly from it, and so help to reduce its influence not only for ourselves but for the age. So when we are at the low point, we should try to remember our fellows, who are unconsciously suffering from that of which we know not only the cause but the remedy.—ROBERT CROSBIE.

FIGURES OF THE TRANSITION AGE

We, Theosophists, would willingly bow before such men of learning as the late Prof. Balfour Stewart, Messrs. Crookes, Quatrefages, Wallace, Agassiz, Butlerof, and several others, though we may not agree, from the standpoint of esoteric philosophy, with all they say. But nothing could make us consent to even a show of respect for the opinions of other men of science, such as Hæckel, Carl Vogt, or Ludwig Büchner, in Germany; or even of Mr. Huxley and his co-thinkers in materialism in England—the colossal erudition of the first-named, notwithstanding. Such men are simply the intellectual and moral murderers of future generations; especially Hæckel, whose crass materialism often rises to the height of idiotic *naivetés* in his reasonings.—H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine,* 1888.

Accepted "scientific truth" contains a large (and increasing) admixture of the follies of mankind. Ideas which are intolerable heresies at a given point in the history of science may therefore sometimes be as near to the facts of Nature as ideas which do not then fall under the suspicion of "crankiness." . . .

Scientific men only deceive themselves as to the value of their work if they try to avoid facing up to the demands of the often tragic life-course of the pioneer—something that requires a nobility of temper and fineness of moral fibre. We have been led to believe in recent years that science draws its authority from a mechanical integrity, whereas, for the real scientist, it is a moral integrity that is the essence of the matter. A lack of understanding of this has produced an exquisite confusion, both within the gates of science and without, where, in the lay mind, the qualities of both science and scientist have been inferred to be those of the uninspired hod-carrier.

—David Lindsay Watson, *Scientists Are Human,* 1938.

FOLLOWING the traditional Aristotelian method of classification, modern thought has divided the age-old attempt to discover the nature of things into the broad fields of Science, Religion, and Philosophy. While it is true that these categories of knowledge generally correspond with definite principles or modes of knowing common to every man, the assumption that there can be scientific truth, without reference to either religion or philosophy, is the greatest delusion of our age. Human enterprise is always a search for the Good, and when we come to ask what, in reality, is the Good that men ought to strive after, the answer can be given only in terms of religion or religious philosophy.

All history testifies to this essential truth. During the *Kali Yug,* when retribution for past action done in ignorance and selfishness is

the prevailing pattern of Karmic law, the "Good" finds its most acceptable definition in the negative terms of liberation from suffering. Thus Buddhism, the greatest religion of our historical period, was shaped to meet the incessant cry of the personal man, "Why do I suffer?" leading him through stages of progressive awakening to the positive position taken by Buddha himself. Gautama Buddha, explains H. P. Blavatsky, was the first to give definite expression to the very old doctrine that "matter and its Protean manifestations are the source and origin of universal evil and sorrow." Only in its dead-letter meaning did Buddha's philosophy point to "the dark side of things on this illusive plane." The apparent pessimism of exoteric Buddhism had the object of releasing mankind from "too strong an attachment to life, which is the chief cause of Selfishness—hence the creator of mutual pain and suffering." Thus Buddhism was in fact more philosophical than the later Gnostic doctrines which quite literally identified Evil with Matter itself, for it "shows evil immanent, *not in matter,* which is eternal, but in the illusions created by it: through the changes and transformations of matter generating life—because these changes are conditioned and such life is ephemeral."

Like Buddhism, all subsequent religions and philosophies of influence have had for their central idea an explanation of the origin of evil or suffering. The facility with which Catholicism seemed to point out the causes of suffering, in both this world and the next was the real source of the power of the Church during its cycle of temporal rule. With the dying out of the philosophical schools, ecclesiastical authority was able to convince men that the forces of evil were personified in Satan, from whose clutches escape was possible only through the earthly representatives of a personal God. Despite the consistent record of betrayal of its ethical professions, the Church maintained psychological mastery over the West for more than ten centuries, aided by subtle moral compromises with human nature.

So long as the Christian explanation of evil was accepted, the energies of the faithful could be guided to priestly advantage. For every known crime, a "holy" justification was found, making its performance a religious duty. It was only necessary to call a man the "enemy of God" to stir all Christendom to his destruction. The extraordinary sacrifices of those who go into battle firmly convinced that every blow they strike lessens by that much the essential evil in the Cosmos cannot be understood except as the result of religious fervor. Mere material selfishness knows nothing of heroism. When

Urban II wished to arouse European chivalry to wrest Jerusalem from its Moslem masters, he said nothing of the loot that Christian knights would find in pagan palaces. No; he called upon them to purge the world of a breed of oriental fiends—

> An accursed race . . . estranged from God . . . Even now the Turks are torturing Christians. . . . Yea, I speak now with the voice of the prophet, *"Arm thyself, O mighty one!"* Take up your arms, valiant sons, and go. Better fall in battle than live to see the sorrow of your people and the desecration of your holy places.
>
> Go, with One who lacks not the power greater than wealth to aid you. Lo, I see before you, leading you to His war, the standard bearer who is invisible—Christ.[1]

As a special inducement to all "defenders of the faith," Urban promised complete absolution of the sins of those who lost their lives "in strife with the pagans." The appeal was irresistible, and it took hundreds of years and incalculable suffering for Europeans to learn that the Mohammedans were not monsters of depravity and irreligion, but only men, very much like themselves, although possessed of a much higher and more refined civilization.

No religion of the world has inspired so much intolerant fury and blind hatred as the Christian religion, and, as a consequence, nowhere in the world has the virus of materialism so deeply infected human society as among the Christian nations. The atheists were able to point to unspeakable crimes condoned by religious authority, to the transparent lies of the priests. It was natural for reformers to conclude that the root of all evil lay in the Church and its teaching. The skill with which sacerdotal manipulators of public opinion had directed the hatred of the masses was now adopted by the atheists and materialists, who turned it against religion itself. Destruction of faith in the supernatural became the watchword of social progress. For the truths taught by God, men substituted the authority of the "laws of Nature." Because the clergy had argued that God must be intelligent and all-wise, the materialists countered that Natural Law is the expression of blind necessity. Because religion held that man has a soul created by God, materialists denounced the very idea of soul as an enslaving dogma. Because the priests preached humility and submission to worldly masters as obedience to God's will, the militant atheists proclaimed the gospel of uprising and violent revolution.

Every virtue sanctioned by Christian tradition the materialists sooner or later identified as a vicious denial of the natural order.

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[1] Harold Lamb, *The Crusades*, pp. 41-2.

Mercy? What has the law of survival to do with this weak sentiment? Compassion is merely "the fellow feeling of the unsound." Care of the unfit was deplored as a humanitarian stupidity—interference with the law of Natural Selection! Chastity? Away with this morbid restraint of instinct, this mother of complexes and inhibitions!

All these doctrines have become popular, not from any inherent attractiveness seen in them by normal men, but from the hatred of religion felt by fanatical materialists who believed that a blow against Church teaching, with any weapon that can be found, is a blow for humanity!

Modern scientific theory, in short, is not the natural outcome of unprejudiced research, but a warped system of half-truths that have been organized as much for polemical purposes in the struggle with religion as for the achievement of independent knowledge. And when the Church was no longer strong enough to be regarded as the "Enemy," the materialistic arsenal afforded its collection of miscellaneous "facts" to every demagogue who claimed to have discovered the "true" cause of human suffering. Like Christianity, Materialism has now a score or more of theologies, each with its devils to exorcise!

Prestige-bearing scientific figures were drafted as prophets of the religion of matter. Hæckel, whom H. P. B. called a "moral murderer of future generations," V. I. Lenin hailed as an apostle of freedom. No one will deny to Lenin a life of sacrifice for his fellows, yet see where he found the truths that would "make men free." In his philosophical defense of Marxism, he wrote:

> The storm which *The Riddle of the Universe* caused in all civilized countries showed . . . the present social significance of the struggle of materialism against idealism and agnosticism. . . . *Hundreds of thousands* of copies of the book were printed. It was immediately translated into all languages and appeared in special popular editions. All this showed quite clearly that it had found its way to the masses, that there were masses of readers whom Hæckel had at once won over to his side. The popular little book became a weapon in the class struggle. The professors of philosophy and theology of all countries of the world began to denounce and "annihilate" Hæckel. . . . And quite characteristic of the whole tragi-comedy was the fact that Hæckel himself *renounced materialism* and rejected the name. . . .
>
> This scientist, who expresses the firmest (albeit uncrystallized) opinions, moods and tendencies of the preponderant majority of naturalists at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, at one stroke, easily and simply revealed what the official

> philosophy tried to conceal. He showed that there is a base which becomes wider and firmer and beneath whose weight all efforts of the thousand and one little schools of idealism, positivism, realism, empirio-criticism and other confusionism are smashed. This base is *naturo-historical materialism*. . . . Hæckel does not enter into an analysis of strictly philosophical problems as such and cannot contrast the materialistic and idealistic theories of knowledge. He *ridicules all* idealistic philosophies, especially all contrivances of "special" schools from the point of view of science, without admitting the possibility of any other theory of knowledge besides that of *naturo-historical materialism*. He ridicules the philosophers from the standpoint of a materialist, without being aware that he himself holds the viewpoint of a materialist! (*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* pp. 302-305.)

Lenin cites all idealistic opposition to Hæckel as "proof" that ideological tendencies are manifestations of class attitudes; he calls *The Riddle of the Universe* a luminous exposition of the "triumphant march of *naturo-historical materialism*" during the nineteenth century, urging its further development. Only when naturalistic materialism is expanded into historical materialism, he argues, can it "serve as a really invincible weapon in the great struggle for the liberation of mankind."

Here, in this last passage, we discover the real energy of the materialistic movement. Its doctrines have been transmitted as a sacred trust by men consecrated to liberating downtrodden humanity. The theory of the class struggle identified all idealism and spiritual teachings with reactionary apologetics for capitalist exploitation, reducing the problem of the origin of evil to the simple terms necessary for mass understanding and mass action.

A contemporary prophet of doom has said truly that "the people" require simplicity for both their loves and their hates. The masses always follow the leader with simple explanations, uncomplicated by "ifs" and "buts," being easily persuaded to heap contempt upon the cautious intellectuals with sanguine doubts. Humanitarians who feel that revolution is not the way of progress have no affirmative teaching to meet the demands of the human heart, no alternative explanation of the origin of evil. Veils of agnosticism cover their eyes, blinding them to the one truth that is capable of withstanding the passionate demands of hatred and destruction. That truth was taught, and *understood* by the "masses," twenty-five centuries ago:

> Ye suffer from yourselves. None else compels,
> None other holds you that ye live and die,
> And whirl upon the wheel, . . .

Within yourselves deliverance must be sought;
Each man his prison makes.

Today, as in Buddha's time, this simple explanation can be understood by all. It lacks only teachers.

The modern world has imprisoned itself in the black dungeon of materialism, and, like convicts become mad with longing for the sight of day, the nations are cutting one another's throats. Taught for nearly a century that "Self-preservation" is the first law of Nature, mankind has now to learn the bitter lesson of its practice. Theosophy was brought to the world to reveal the *ethical* application of this law, by showing, as H. P. Blavatsky wrote,

> that this *pseudo* law is a "pretended" law indeed, as far as the human family is concerned, and a fiction of the most dangerous kind. "Self-preservation," on these lines, is indeed and in truth a sure, if a slow, suicide, for it is a policy of mutual homicide, because men by descending to its practical application among themselves, merge more and more by a retrograde reinvolution into the animal kingdom. This is what the "struggle for life" is in reality, even on the purely materialistic lines of political economy. Once that this axiomatic truth is proved to all men; the same instinct of self-preservation only directed into its true channel will make them turn to *altruism*—as their surest policy of salvation. (THEOSOPHY I, 201.)

But how can Altruism be expected of a civilization whose leading educators proclaim that modern knowledge has made intelligible ethics impossible? The content of a recent series of lectures on "Ethics and Modern Life" is described by a writer in *Science:*

> The first title was "The Dilemma of Modern Ethics." The dilemma seemed to be that there is no way by which the problem of human conduct could even be considered. Ideas just don't have any contact with action, and every term that is used is a dilemma in itself. The second lecture was on "The Venture of Moral Philosophy." The venture appeared to be that it was most extraordinary that anyone would have the temerity to even try to do anything about conduct. The third lecture had to do with the divergence of theory and practice in which it was again brought out that it is practically impossible to bring ideas to bear upon the world of fact and experience. In the fourth lecture entitled, "The Modern Experiment; Ideas and Immediate Experience," it looked as if the lecturer were going to arrive at something which at least faintly resembled an effective approach to the problem, the scientific approach, if you please. The startling concept was advanced that possibly ideas could be brought to bear on immediate experience. In the last lecture of the series, however, entitled "The Persistent Tension in Experience

> and Morals," the idea was given up and it was indicated that the whole matter was in a condition of confusion, futility, and conflict. It gave no real hope to the human race for ever doing anything effective in directly meeting their problems in the improvement of social and moral relationships which is so necessary if civilization is to continue. Yet this authority in the field of ethics received nearly $6.00 a minute for bringing his audience to such a state of confusion and impression of futility. (*Science,* Sept. 12, 1941.)

Years ago, H. P. Blavatsky predicted this outcome for the false idealism which attempts to found rules of conduct on materialism. "The Monists," she wrote, "are worse than the Materialists; because, while looking at the Universe and psycho-spiritual man from the same negative standpoint, the latter put their case far less plausibly than sceptics of Mr. Tyndall's or even Mr. Huxley's stamp." Frank materialism ends in logical absurdity, illustrated today in the extreme theories of Freud and Watson. But modern Idealism "not only contrives to absorb, on the one hand, the basic negations of Atheism, but lands its votaries in a tangle of *unreality,* which culminates in a practical Nihilism." (*S. D.* I, 528; II, 651.) The ethical nihilism of scientific psychology, more than any other single cause, has delivered mankind into the hands of the political nihilists, the scavengers of moral failure and rampant selfishness.

Musing on the moral weaknesses of modern society, Dr. Edwin G. Conklin, an eminent biologist, wonders why "scientists did not win the freedom they have generally enjoyed," observing that "they have not been conspicuous in defending this freedom when it has been threatened." Acknowledging some notable exceptions, he attributes the moral mediocrity of scientists in general to the fact that there is nothing in science itself which cultivates the heroic spirit. The scientist "has little inclination to suffer and die for his faith, but is willing to wait for the increase and diffusion of knowledge." Almost pathetically, Dr. Conklin asks:

> How can men be induced to live up to the best they know? How can they be brought to substitute the spirit of service for selfishness, love for hate, reason for unreason? The long efforts of past centuries show that there is no rapid solution of this great problem. (*Science,* Dec. 31, 1937.)

First step in this solution is honest recognition that many of the teachings of science lead men logically to embrace selfishness in preference to service, and to forget "the best they know." Next it is necessary to question the very foundations of the scientific theory of knowledge, which maintains that the moral qualities of the scientific investigator play no part in the results of his research. To this

day, partisan zeal for conflicting theories is defended as leading to actual knowledge. In a recent text on the several schools of modern psychology—that most chaotic and unorganized of the social sciences —it is cheerfully affirmed:

> The most intolerant schools are often the most productive; and loyalties, aversions, and strongly emotional prejudices may operate in the production of impersonal truth. For the product of scientific thought is identifiable neither with the means nor with the conditions of its production; and it is the product that is impartial and impersonal. The scientific method is a device for making it so, regardless of the conditions that motivated its acquisition.[2]

This claim of infallibility for the scientific *method* of research, independent of the faults or foibles of investigators, is simply a reincarnation of sacerdotalism, as destructive of freedom of thought as any unprovable religious dogma. It is this claim which scientists themselves must renounce as an incredible delusion, before there can be even the beginnings of a philosophy of life which is both ethical and scientific.

Are there any signs of a movement in this direction?

In 1939 a young theoretical physicist, at one time a teacher at Antioch College, published a book which may be regarded as marking a great turning point in the scientific theory of knowledge. The thesis of this book, *Scientists Are Human,* by David Lindsay Watson, is that every scientific theory is shaped and colored by the moral qualities of its creator, and that true progress in scientific knowledge is as dependent on right motive as any other enterprise. Mr. Watson predicts radical reforms in the scientific method of the future.

> Science [he writes] is trying to make a dignified retreat from its recent uncritical faith in the "objectivity" of the last century. Reassuring bulletins are issued describing this movement as an "advance." It is my belief that, when the retreat has been completed, scientific men will find that the majority of their ideas will have to be surrendered. The sources of scientific truth will be found to be much more subtle and elusive than even the most emancipated of the relativists is now willing to admit (pp. 2-3).

What, in the view of this writer, are the conditions necessary to the increase of knowledge? Mr. Watson argues that the ethical conceptions and social ideals of society always determine the truth-content of scientific theories, which is the same as saying that *ethical values are primary to knowledge of any kind.* This is the process:

> The social forces *select* certain of the scientist's abilities and aptitudes for approval. The social organization acts as a *filter* on the

[2] Edna Heidbreder, *Seven Psychologies,* 1933, p. 428.

> scientific results which are candidates for recognition. Where the belief and the practice of the society are sound, this practice leads to scientific truth. Where the social features of scientific organization are faulty or based on something other than love of truth (for instance, on the demands of stability, power, or ambition), this selecting process will lead to error. But this sort of error will have, in the eyes of all except intellectually honest insiders, all the authority of scientific tradition behind it (p. 50).

We have seen, to take some examples, the social forces which "selected" the Hæckelian theory of evolution for the central dogma of "scientific socialism." We have watched how the scientific orthodoxy of the present day has received in silence the alternative to the ape-origin theory, proposed, with numerous supporting facts, by Dr. Osborn. Today we listen to recitations by ethical theorists on the futility of all their undertakings. Our ignorance of fundamentals is praised as a fine "impartiality" which refuses to adopt any principles on which an ethical attitude might be based.

These are only a few pertinent illustrations, taken from an inexhaustible store, which show how dogmatic presuppositions and fallacious theories are elevated to the high authority of scientific "truth." Mr. Watson offers many more, drawn chiefly from the world of institutional science, where originality must overcome the stubbornest kind of moral and intellectual inertia before recognition can be obtained. But with publication of *Scientists Are Human,* there is at least the beginning of self-consciousness and self-criticism among scientists themselves. For the past decade or so, there has been a growing realization in scientific circles that actual knowledge involves much more than mere physical measurement, and now this writer makes it quite clear that the great "Method" of science requires the guidance that only ethical philosophy can provide.

"We are now in a transition period," wrote William Q. Judge in an important *Path* article, predicting that "in the twentieth century there will be a revival of genuine philosophy, and the Secret Doctrine will be the basis of the 'New Philosophy'." *Scientists Are Human* should be read carefully by Theosophical students, as marking a significant mile-post along the road to this desired end. As other thoughtful minds develop the many implications of the thesis proposed by Mr. Watson, its truth will become more and more evident, until, finally, the advanced thinkers of the race will have constructed a natural meeting-ground for Science and Theosophic principles. When that day arrives, the "New Philosophy" will be born.

UNEVEN WAYS

THE story of the human self is a plunge into the night of matter and its passions, followed by slow re-ascent of the Path that "winds uphill all the way," into the ancient eternal sunlight of his origin.

In point of time, the race of our birth is a little past the turning point and in full throes of the misery of reconciling itself to a reversal of all its past course.

The Teachers of olden times and of now have lived to make that way clear for men. Gautama Buddha discoursed on the three roads that were possible: enlightenment through the extremes of sin and sorrow; enlightenment through asceticism; and finally, the Middle Way, the way of unremitting climb, but within the capacity of human beings. Essentially, it is the slow building of spiritual power by hourly conquest of small sins and limitations; it is the right life among men, the household life of enjoyments and fulfillments not sought for in violence and craving, not rejected either, but recognized as temporary, and for learning through both fulfillment and disappointment.

A man can follow this road practically.

But the age is full of violence borrowed from the animal life in us that we have to carry up the road, and moderation is not our forte. Too often the "beginner" will not content himself with less than quick Adeptship. We discipline ourselves without understanding; invariably something breaks, and we fall into the pit as a necessity of Eternal Balance. Many lives are full of oscillations between the antitypes of Jekyll and Hyde, in cycles of months, days, and even only hours. Oscillations may be as great as from incarnation to incarnation—many of our proud "ascetics" are only on a temporary reverse arc of sensualism!

All the time the Eternal in us presses insistently toward the higher goal, while this very urge to conquest brings increasing pressure on our weakest points. Departing from the Middle Way, a man may find himself trying to follow both the alternatives at once. In time there may come illumination, but in such wise that one will have difficulty in distinguishing the break of rosy dawn from the fires of hell reflected upon the clouds of eternal night.

Strong must he be who would escape the inferno by the width of a razor's edge; who would prevail and reach quicker release than his more modest brother. The strength of the ascetic is in his love for his fellows. The selfish devotee lives to no purpose. Falling ones may find the key to their weakness in the heresy of separateness.

AMONG YOUTH-COMPANIONS

I AM afraid I neglected to tell our visitor from New York the subject for our special discussion this evening," said Dave. "We try to save one hour after our concentrated study on the *Ocean* for an open forum on current problems, social as well as philosophical," he explained, turning to Lawrence. "At the end of the period last week, Gail suggested Socialism as the topic for this time."

Lawrence nodded with interest.

"The idea I had in mind," said Gail, "was an evaluation of present Socialism and so-called liberal trends of thought. It's too bad we haven't a socialist among us, because if we did, I think we would get more out of the discussion."

"Well," said Lawrence, "perhaps you *have* one. I have always considered myself a socialist in regard to matters of economic and political philosophy. Of course, there is a big difference between the philosophy of evolutionary socialism and the revolutionary Communism inspired by Karl Marx, don't you think?"

"I've noticed that my best professors in the university seem to have a very high regard for the writings of socialistic philosophers," offered King, "and yet they, too, fight shy of Communism. It has led me to conclude that so far as programs of social action are concerned, the best is probably neither extreme right nor extreme left, but somewhere in the middle."

"Here's something I'd like to ask Lawrence," spoke up Gail, "which I think should really get us started. How do you reconcile H. P. B.'s statement that the Theosophical Society is 'hostile to the insane dreams of Socialism and Communism' with your own pro-socialistic position? I certainly don't mean to question your views before I even hear them, nor do I think I'd want to anyway, for I've always felt sympathetic towards the ideas of my own socialist friends. But that statement of Madame Blavatsky's has always made me pause before giving wholehearted approval."

Lawrence smiled. "Someone brought that same passage to my attention a year or so ago," he answered, "but knowing that H. P. B. always has something to say on both sides of the question, I began to look around in her writings for something to balance it. You must be familiar with her approval of Edward Bellamy and the spirit of many socialists in the *Key to Theosophy*. Then, too, Judge seems to assign Thomas Paine a very important part in envisioning the true destiny of America, and Paine, according to my standards, was a full-fledged socialist."

"Do you mean that Thomas Paine would be a member of the Socialist Party if he were alive today?" asked Alayne incredulously.

"I hardly think we can judge," laughed Lawrence, "but he certainly might be. Of course, as I said, there's a vast difference between the socialist ideal and any politicians who try to represent it. They are as fallible as we are in always representing Theosophy perfectly. Here's the way I look at it. From the perspective of Theosophy, any plan for improving social conditions which will work practically is good. Evolutionary socialism proposes a gradual approach to the ideal of each giving according to his abilities, and receiving according to his needs, which would accomplish a more even distribution of land and wealth. This seems to me to be a consummation to be Theosophically wished for when the methods for achieving it are based on education and controlled by a genuine respect for the dignity of the individual. I think that the trouble with so many belligerent communists is that they have converted the economic program of socialism into a sort of materialistic religion. The socialist does not *have* to believe that environment determines the individual, even though many of them still do. That's another place where we can see a hangover of indignation against the illogicality of the personal god idea."

"That sounds sensible," said Gail. "And you mean that many of the socialists have a practical goal in mind, while realizing that force is not the rightful means of achieving it?"

"Precisely," said Lawrence. "And it's the liberals of that type who need Theosophy most desperately. You see, if you take evolutionary socialism and study Theosophy at the same time, you discover how beautifully complementary the broad social ideals envisioned by both are. Then, too, it is evident that any real socialist who worked for bettering the lot of the lower classes would learn a great deal of Theosophy through being forced to practice it, in order to get worth-while results. Steps taken towards welding all classes into a sort of communal unit would help stimulate the type of thinking that adopted the First Object of the Theosophical Society. However, unless controlled by philosophy, unwise leaders inevitably seek a short-cut, trying to induce an abrupt social revolution by arousing class hatred. It all seems to boil down to this. If a man uses socialism as a practical economic counsel of perfection, while still thinking of human beings Theosophically, he no longer suffers from the "insane dream" that man is nothing but an economic animal. Those who think he is, and who try to establish reforms with

only an economic base—as have so many experimeters in socialized communities—always discover that the human equation ruins their program because they have not fully understood it."

"One of the articles in the magazine, THEOSOPHY, made some very good points along that line," said Dave thoughtfully. The article is called "Social Theories and Ideals" (January, 1940), and it brings together a lot of convincing evidence, admitted and recorded by the socialists themselves, that without what they call a 'religious dynamic,' the socialistic society always deteriorates from within and destroys itself. That means they have needed a real metaphysical basis for ethics—Karma and Reincarnation, to us.

"So you see," finished Lawrence, "it's really quite easy to understand why H. P. B. was hostile to those who thought socialism was the complete answer or the only one, for such socialists were philosophical materialists of the type that have caused so much havoc in Europe and Russia while hiding under a socialistic banner."

"Lawrence, why do you think there is such a lack of understanding between socialists and conservatives?" asked Gail.

"Because both sides have become so set in habits of thought that they will fight bitterly, even while they often wish the same result under a different name. I remember reading in the 'Lookout' of a survey taken to find out whether people would approve of socialism when it was labelled differently. The results were amazing, because they showed that a very large proportion were against any program *called* socialistic, and *for* it when you considered it on its own inherent worth. I am afraid, however, that many of the radical socialists are responsible for such a feeling of popular disapproval.

"I'd like to give you my own reason for approving many socialistic writings," said Lawrence, somewhat apologetically, after a pause. "It's really twofold. First, it seems inevitable to me that with the kind of super-technology we are drifting into, a more even distribution of wealth is necessary if national unity is to persist, and I think this holds for every country in the world. I'd like to see ourselves educated to the recognition of the practical need, making it possible for us to go ahead consciously rather than propelled by social catastrophe. Second, I know for a fact from personal experience that there are a lot of very good potential Theosophists who now call socialism their religion simply because they have been completely fed up with the Christian philosophy of 'waiting for God to do it.' They can certainly use Theosophy and Theosophy can use them."

"Well," said King, "I guess it doesn't much matter what we call people—Socialist, Christian or Theosophist. It's their motive and their way of life that is the most important, so we should always look behind the labels they carry to what their heart is really after. But I think socialists can never do any permanent good unless they find a philosophy to support their ideals—one that will awaken in others the same zeal for reform that they have."

"I agree," said Alayne. "You have to reform ideas before you can reform people or social orders. That's why so many meetings at the Hall emphasize the point that the answer to both social and world problems is in education."

"That's all very well and good, and I agree in theory," answered Gail, "but you can't just climb up on the top of Theosophy Hall and shout 'Yoo Hoo! Karma and Reincarnation! It's wonderful!' expecting Norman Thomas to dissolve the activities of the Socialist Party while his followers study metaphysics! None of the planners for social action in the world, whether their ideas are bad or good, are going to suspend their programs in order to study the Three Fundamentals. They're going to keep right on moving, making mistakes and learning the hard way, until something forcibly calls the Theosophical philosophy to their attention. You have to be close enough to the movements struggling for social improvement so that their workers can see you moving in the same direction, observe your efforts, while still carrying on their own, and finally ask to compare notes."

Max looked very serious. "If all the Theosophists went around to get into other movements that needed help, there wouldn't be very many left to have meetings. We have just a few anyway, and they have so many that I think they should come to Theosophy instead of the other way around."

Gail nodded. "We should never forget that. But I meant that we should create enough mutual understanding with the members of constructive social movements, so that they will have a chance to know we exist, and Theosophists need to be awake to every opportunity. Socialists or "reformed" Christians can't come to Theosophy unless they know it's there to come to."

"I don't think they ever will know unless we learn to speak their language so that they can understand us," said Lawrence. Theosophy *is* the Universal Language, of course, potentially, but we should make that potentiality come alive as far as we can by trying to understand the problems which concern others so much. Why shouldn't Theosophists like ourselves learn to know enough about

the world so that we can spread Theosophy through wise practical counsel to individuals, and on a large scale through writings about things that are uppermost in the public mind at the time? It seems to me that such activity is a very fine way of solidifying the bonds made by the Theosophist's pledge to 'render service to all that lives'; it means he is always trying to enlarge his field of applying Theosophy."

"Well," said Janice, "this discussion has certainly given me a lot to think about. I've always considered socialists to be a sort of strange race apart, like the Australian bushmen or something. When I was in high school we used to point at one or two fellows who attended socialist meetings and wonder whatever made them so peculiar. I thought they were pretty hopeless from a Theosophical point of view—sort of impossible to reach, like the Christians. But maybe I shouldn't say that about the Christians, either. There's so much going on I really don't know about."

"Our time is pretty nearly up," King broke in at this point, "and we still have to pick a subject for next week's discussion. What about Education? I know that covers a lot of ground, but if we stick to fundamentals maybe we'll be able to make some general approach."

"We might limit it to the modern university," suggested Gail. "Everybody is saying that university education especially lacks moral influence, and perhaps, with the help of Theosophy, we could get at the causes of this."

"Well," said Janice, "after Education I think we ought to take up Christianity. Religion seems to be so 'good' for some people, and yet we know what the Personal God idea has done to the Race Mind. I'd like to understand it better."

"Sounds good to me," said King. "If we all agree then, next week, Education, and after that, our friends, the Christians."

BARRIER OF "LEARNING"

The very learned are so immersed in one system that they reject nearly all thought not in accord with preconceived notions. The sincere ignorant one is often able to get the truth but not able to express it. The ignorant masses generally hold in their minds the general truths of Nature, but are limited as to expression. And most of the best discoveries of scientific men have been obtained in this subconscious telepathic mode. Indeed, they often arrive in the learned brain from some obscure and so-called ignorant person, and then the scientific discoverer makes himself famous because of his power of expression and means for giving it out.—W. Q. J.

THE MYSTERY OF BIRTH

BEFORE us every day stands the mystery of birth. Reflection on the entrance of an ego into human flesh may open the way to great knowledge for those who seek to understand this wonder. But to comprehend fully its meaning, we must tear our minds loose from the bonds of materialism. Inevitably, when we try to think on metaphysical subjects, our minds are surrounded with the three dimensions and four directions of physical matter. Even the diligent student sometimes discovers to his chagrin that he habitually thinks of man's sevenfold nature as a series of principles from "high" to "low"—high and low unconsciously having become "places" in his mind. As a matter of fact, there is only one Principle—Atma—which uses six vehicles to shine through as the sun through all space.

Similarly with the seven globes of our earth. We are wont to consider them as one above the other, or one "inside" the other, according to our physical conceptions of "in and out," or "up and down." H. P. B. says in *The Secret Doctrine:*

> The relation of these worlds to ours is not that of a series of egg-shaped boxes enclosed one within the other, like the toys called Chinese nests; each is entirely under its own special laws and conditions, having no direct relation to our sphere. The inhabitants of these, as already said, may be, for all we know, or feel, passing *through* and *around* us as if through empty space. . . .

All is Life. All natures of man and the earth are made up of particles or points of materiality, "atoms," to borrow a word from the scientists; for even Buddhi is "material" compared to Atma. The thoughts of a man impress each and every particle he contacts; these in turn affect other particles, and thus the impress is carried throughout the universe.

During his lifetime these "particles" of life are continuously being released, and at death all those of his four lower vehicles are attracted to the forms in great nature which are typical of the impressions given by the man. The various types of impressions are expressed in the three Qualities—*Satwa,* truth and stability; *Rajas,* action, war, ambition, and *Tamas,* indifference, ignorance. And at the same time, other human beings all over the earth are affecting each other for good or ill, by their thoughts and actions.

If we keep in mind H. P. B.'s remark on the interpenetrating of the seven worlds, we may realize that Devachan, the sphere to which the Ego goes at death, is not some high and distant realm like the

Christian heaven, but rather a deep concentration of the Ego, without "place-where" relation. As his train of thought in a dream-world of bliss wanes, the man's thirst for physical existence returns, stirring the life-particles which belong to him, which he has used before and given his "mark." Thus it is said that the *Skandhas* wait for him at the door of birth. The returning Ego must come to those parents who have created affinities with some of the life-particles he has used—lives which he and they mutually exchanged and impressed in former bodies. Because the attraction of these atoms to their rightful owners is actually the material agency for Karma, we say that Karma draws the soul to this or that body of this or that family, nation, and race.

But was the birth into this new form an entrance from above, or below, or outside the earth? It was rather the drawing together of particles from all the spheres of life—call them "within" or "without," if you like, but only metaphysically; actually, the Ego has emerged from a state of consciousness, of meditation. We say the sun shines down upon us. But the sun does not shine up or down, it radiates through space and its pure light is colored by the particles through which its rays shine. So with the light of soul.

STAY IN KAMALOKA

It is a well known fact that fear or great anxiety for everything left behind on earth is capable of retaining a shell, which must have otherwise dissolved, for a longer period in the earth's atmosphere than it would in the event of a quiet death. Although the shell when left to itself is incapable of acquiring any fresh impression, yet, when galvanized, so to say, by *rapport* with a medium, it is quite capable of living for years a vicarious life and receiving all the impressions of the medium. Another fact must always be borne in mind in seeking for an explanation of the phenomena of mediumship—namely, that the average stay of shells in *Kamaloka* before final disintegration is sometimes of very long duration. Twenty-five to 30 years would not be too long, with a medium to preserve its vitality.

—*Theosophist,* December-January, 1883-4.

A THEOSOPHIST UNAWARE

> It may be correctly stated that were Leibnitz' and Spinoza's systems reconciled, the essence and Spirit of esoteric philosophy would be made to appear. From the shock of the two—as opposed to the Cartesian system—emerge the truths of the Archaic doctrine. . . . There was but ONE for Spinoza; for Leibnitz an infinitude of Beings, *from,* and *in,* the One. Hence, though both admitted but *one real Entity,* while Spinoza made it impersonal and indivisible, Leibnitz divided his *personal* Deity into a number of divine and semi-divine Beings. —*The Secret Doctrine,* 1888.

ACCORDING to Mosheim, Spinoza omitted the word "God" entirely from the first draft of his *Ethics,* using only the term *Nature.* It was his translator, Meyerus, in putting the work from Dutch into Latin, who substituted "God" throughout the text, having obtained Spinoza's permission. Not to mention God, Meyerus argued, would arm the authorities against Spinoza and make him the subject of severe persecution. Even with this precaution, Spinoza did not publish the *Ethics* during his lifetime, hoping, perhaps, that the book would gain a better reception if time was allowed for the agitation against his opinions, already expressed in the *Tractatus,* to diminish.

Spinoza died in 1677, but nearly a century passed before the full force of his ideas began to make itself felt in European thought. The opprobrium heaped upon him while he was alive continued to suppress his doctrines after his death, philosophers, and even sceptics, sharing in this monumental injustice. Pierre Bayle, whose *Dictionary* was a forerunner of the famous *Encyclopedia,* although himself an enemy of irrational dogmatism, spread the view that Spinoza was an atheistic fatalist. Wolff, the popularizer of Leibniz, added to these accusations, with the result that Spinoza was read hardly at all during the first half of the eighteenth century. It was not until the great figures of the German Enlightenment—Lessing, Herder, Goethe and Jacobi—discovered what the much maligned Jew had himself written that there was any true appreciation of Spinoza's profoundly important contribution to western philosophy. Their revival of Spinoza's God-idea was a central part of what H. P. Blavatsky has called "the quasi-occult views of the German pantheistic schools," without which the flowering of transcendental idealism in Europe and America would not have been possible.

Considering this return to Spinoza as part of the Theosophical Movement of the eighteenth century, there is more than "coin-

cidence" in the fact that those same leaders in German thought found in Leibniz the complementary conceptions which were needed to complete their pantheistic philosophy. They saw, as H. P. B. was to point out a century later, that Spinoza's system lacked a metaphysical explanation of the dynamic interplay of beings and the forces of nature. There is not only one great Cause, but many lesser causes to be understood and accounted for in philosophy. This was accomplished by Leibniz in his *Monadology*. Of all the thinkers of the eighteenth century, the logical necessity of joining Leibniz with Spinoza was seen most clearly by Johann Gottfried Herder, whose valuable work, *God, Some Conversations,* has recently been translated into English for the first time.*

In an excellent historical summary of Herder's time, the translator, Burkhardt, gives the essence of his author's thought:

> The two great themes of the "Conversations" are the interrelated conceptions of divine immanence and the dynamism of nature. God is found revealed in every point of nature. The universe is conceived as a unified complex of forces, arranged in a hierarchy, and operating according to immutable laws which are at one and the same time the evidence of the divine power, and the activity of God himself realized in the world. The whole is continuous; there are neither gaps nor leaps in nature. Quiescence is negation; death is merely apparent. As Goethe, who shared these conceptions with Herder, put it, it is nature's way of having many lives. Only change is real, and this change Herder conceives as progressive development, a grand teleology whose goal is the realization of all the potentialities of nature. In all the great variety and life of the universe there is a unity which is God, the One in All.

As evidence of how fundamental truths suggest each other, it may be noted that both Goethe and Lessing were believers in Reincarnation, although Herder himself shows this faith only by implication. While he discusses the doctrine of rebirth in his *Dialogues on Metempsychosis,* Herder seems not to have realized how essential it is to rational ethics. Leaving the problem of human immortality without definite treatment, he is content to speak of the incessant motions in nature as "eternal *palingenesis,*" which is a Greek equivalent of reincarnation.

Herder's contribution to the development of western idealism was rather in his general cosmological conceptions and his stubborn refusal to concede personality to the Deity. So determined was he not to permit the use of imagery in connection with the God-idea that

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* Translated by Frederick H. Burkhardt, published by Oskar Piest, 250 West 57th Street, New York City (1940), $2.50.

he objected to the expression "World-Soul" as possibly indicating a tendency to personification. But despite his war on all anthropomorphism, twentieth century readers will inevitably feel a curious strain of conflict between Herder's Pantheism and his frequent references to Deity as "He" and "Him." A passage from the Third Conversation will illustrate:

> The eternal, infinite root of all things is so exalted beyond our power of imagination, that all space and time vanishes in Him. We finite beings, encompassed by space and time so that we conceive all things only in their terms, can but say of the highest cause, "It is. It is active."

These personal pronouns warp Herder's meaning and are a constant irritation. H. P. B.'s statement, "the Initiates never use the epithet 'God' to designate the One and Secondless Principle in the Universe," grows in significance for the reader of the *Conversations*. There is a pathos in the attempt of this noble mind to throw off the degrading influence of theology, only to fall into verbal traps which distort and cramp his soaring imagination. Yet Herder struggled mightily. In the second edition of the *Conversations* he revised several pages to insist that his ascription of intelligence to Deity did not imply that God is a "person." And in another place he inserted a passage identifying God with the Self of All: "He alone in whom all is, who comprehends and sustains all, can say: 'I am the Self. There is none apart from me'."

At a single stroke, Herder delivers himself from the Cartesian dogma of "dead matter." It is not dead, but *lives*.

> For in it and conforming to its outer and inner organs, a thousand living manifold forces are at work. The more we learn about matter, the more forces we discover in it, so that the empty conception of a dead extension disappears.

Here is the living activity of the Leibnizian doctrine. Nature is the harmonious interrelation of congeries of intelligent forces —Monads—working in and through matter, eternally building, changing and destroying their forms and making new ones. The world is a living whole:

> All the forces of nature function organically. Every organization is nothing else than a system of living forces, which serve a principal force in accordance with eternal laws. . . . Every living force is active and continues active. Thus, with every continuation of activity, it progresses and perfects itself according to inner eternal laws of wisdom and goodness, which are urged upon it and inherent in it. . . . All that we call evil is a nonentity. But we call evil that which is limitation, or opposition, or transition, . . .

The difficult problem of how the world comes into being, from its latency in divine mind, and of why the cosmic order is as it is, Herder could not explain, because he failed to see the necessity for metaphysical degrees of manifestation—symbolized by the Pythagorean triangle, and stated in the Secret Doctrine in the teaching of the first, second and third *Logoi;* and because the origin of the world order must remain an unfathomable mystery without the ancient Greek conception of cosmic cycles, endlessly repeating the pattern of past evolutions. But an understanding of these most subtle metaphysical conceptions is too much to require of the eighteenth century. It is enough that Herder taught what he did, and attempted to apply in his life the sublime spirit of his philosophy. Emancipation from dead religious forms is always a gradual process, and if all men were as faithful to their spiritual intuitions as was Johann Gottfried Herder, the world would long since have found its way to liberation.

SLEEP OF MEN AND ANIMALS

The moral distinction between lower animals and man is curiously illustrated in the character of their sleep. A man ordinarily awakens slowly from a deep sleep; he does not for a time realize where he is; he seems to be more or less dazed and not entirely satisfied with the change which seems to him to have taken place. He is apt to act for a few moments as though he had been in a place or society which he was reluctant to leave. As Charles Lamb expressed it, he wishes to lie a little longer to digest his dreams.

A sleeping dog, however, will hear a noise which his master, though by his side, awake, will not hear, and in an instant is in as full possession of all his faculties as if he had not been sleeping. He betrays no evidence of having reluctantly parted with pleasant company or pleasant occupations. And why should he? He has no affections for his kind when awake for which he would sacrifice a bone, though he did not wish it himself.

Is not this precisely what we should expect from the psychical difference of the dog from the man? And does it not warrant the conclusion that when a man is sleeping his condition and associations are as different from a dog's as they are while awake?

—JOHN BIGELOW, *The Mystery of Sleep.*

ON THE LOOKOUT

Second Conference On Science, Religion, and Philosophy

During September, 1940, a number of leading American scholars and scientists gathered in New York City to take part in a "Conference" on Science, Philosophy and Religion. (See Theosophy XXIX, 38.) The high point of the discussions was reached when Dr. Albert Einstein singled out the personal God idea as responsible for "incalculable harm to human progress." Orthodox theologians have been growling and spitting at the great physicist ever since, and, needless to say, Dr. Einstein was not invited to speak at the 1941 sessions. Careful to preserve the peace of mediocrity among the participants, sponsors of the Conference produced a list of speakers who were sure not to offend by saying anything "controversial." As a consequence, whatever qualities the second Conference may have had, moral vitality and intellectual penetration were seldom present. One scientist, Hudson Hoagland of Clark University, cautiously affirmed the inability of most scientific thinkers to accept a personal God, but on the question of the social consequences which may follow from faith in an extra-cosmic creator, he remained respectfully silent.

"The Spiritual Basis of Democracy"

A statement with this title by a group of Princeton scientists and teachers is extremely depressing. After patronizing reference to the pantheistic religion which "has seemed to many philosophers, scientists, and poets from the Stoics onwards to be the highest wisdom," these more advanced moderns, including the astronomer, Henry Norris Russell, complain that "contemplation of values loses much of its high significance when not related to the purposes of a divine spiritual Being." They continue:

> For these and other reasons, the Hebraic-Christian moral and religious conception of the spiritual life is superior to the contemplative-mystical conception. In contemplation of value, mystical union, and identification with nature alike, the source of meaning and value is impersonal, and man must by his unaided effort establish relation with it. In the Hebraic-Christian conception, on the other hand, the Divine is conceived in personal terms. Man's relationship with God is made possible by an antecedent act of revelation on His part. God reaches down to man in grace, man responds in gratitude and love. Moreover, since God is conceived primarily as moral will, and since His purpose is fulfilled in human life, man's task is not simply to contemplate ultimate reality and value but to act in harmony with God's purpose for human life and history.

Let us pray!

SOURCE OF DEMOCRACY?

The 1941 conference was on Science, Philosophy and Religion "in their relation to the Democratic way of life." Many of the papers offered by theologians sought to show the foundations of democracy in the Christian religion, or, to use the phrase often employed by these scholars, the "Hebrew-Christian culture pattern." It is argued that democracy derives at least in part from the metaphysical premise that there is "a God who loves all men, and who wishes all to love Him in return." Unlike the Greeks, who were slave-owning, "the Hebrews and Christians saw in the relation of God to man a common factor in human beings more significant than all the differences." From this "common factor" the egalitarian principle of popular government is derived. But the historical fact that the great movements toward political freedom were usually opposed by Christian ecclesiastics was hardly mentioned.

One speaker, Dr. Charles Hartshorne of the University of Chicago, showed critical awareness by pointing out that the religious claim of infallibility is identical with totalitarian assumption. He urged that democracy is possible only among men who admit their imperfect knowledge of God. In short, the metaphysics behind the democratic conception of the state postulates that because nobody "knows" ultimate truth, a just social order must assume the equal value of every man's opinion. This view avoids the absolute authority of "Revelation" from a God conceived as a "super-tyrant." Dr. Hartshorne would substitute the idea of God "as 'loving' in a more genuine sense than any tyrant conception understands." This is named "a genuinely social conception of God."

IF GOD "LOVES," WHO HATES?

The familiar idea that "God is love" has an attractive simplicity, but its usefulness as the foundation of the social order may be gravely questioned. Believers in the doctrine of "Agape" (divine love) have still to explain the presence of evil in the world, and in default of a philosophical solution they are forced to make personal devils of certain "evil" men. Now a personal explanation of evil is just as defective, morally and philosophically, as the idea of a personal God, and will inevitably produce the same social chaos. Nor is the "loving" God of liberal Christianity really impersonal. "It," or "He," is still conceived in terms of a great Being with a human characteristic, namely, "love," which men think the Deity ought to possess.

Rise of Individualism

The criticisms of scientific materialism on which the Princeton professors found their return to the Christian religion are far sounder than their justification of a personal God. Their argument runs:

> Naturalism denies both man's relation to an order of ultimate values and his dependence upon a cosmic spiritual Power. It thus divorces him from the moral and spiritual order to which he belongs and upon which he depends for strength and direction. It encourages him to determine his ends for himself as a completely autonomous being, without any norm above his own interests and desires, individual and collective. As a result, it leads to pride and egoism. The individual, having nothing higher than himself to worship or serve, worships himself, his reason, his culture, or his race.

This passage brings echoes of statements made by William Q. Judge regarding the curse of selfish individualism. In America, individualism, he wrote,

> being totally unrestrained and forming in fact the basis of independence here, it has culminated. Its bad effects—vaguely as yet shadowing the horizon—might have been avoided if the doctrines of the Wisdom-Religion had been also believed by the founders of the republic. And so, after sweeping away the fetters forged by priestly dogma and kingly rule, we find springing up a superstition far worse than that which we have been used to call by the name. It is the superstition of materialism that bows down to a science which leads only to negation. (*Gita Notes,* pp. 87-8.)

And in *Echoes from the Orient,* he said, prophetically:

> The civilization of today, and especially of the United States, is an attempt to accentuate and glorify the individual. The oft-repeated declaration that any born citizen may aspire to occupy the highest office in the gift of the nation is proof of this, and the Mahatmas who guard the truth through the ages while nations are decaying, assert that the reaction is sure to come in a relapse into the worst forms of anarchy (p. 5).

Contradictions in "Naturalism"

The Princeton group continues with a "psychoanalysis" of well-meaning naturalist thinkers:

> Influenced by the last remnants of philosophical Idealism, romantic Transcendentalism, or religious Theism in our day, they act as if they still believed in the spiritual conception of man which they have intellectually repudiated. They try to maintain their feeling for the dignity of man while paying homage to an essentially materialistic philosophy according to which man is simply a highly developed animal. They are loyal to their democratic society and culture, but

> they deny the spiritual nature of man and his values upon which it has been built. In short, they are living off the spiritual capital which has come down to them from their classical and religious heritage, while at the same time they ignore that heritage itself as antiquated and false.

After this clear-seeing diagnosis of our moral ills, and the weakness of modern ethical conceptions, the Princeton professors urge that "scholars and teachers must recover and reaffirm the spiritual conception of man and his good which we have derived from Greek and Hebraic-Christian sources." We must return, not to Pantheism, but to the very ideas which produced the materialistic revolution in the first place. The deformation of the intellectual principle seems to have gone pretty far at Princeton! No evidence from history is offered to support the preference of the Princeton group for conceiving the Divine in "personal terms." They simply assert mystical Pantheism is inferior because it "may lead to a depreciation of the individual and his rational and moral activity." Alas for Pythagoras and Plato! Poor Plotinus! Lao-tze, Confucius and Buddha were alike deprived of the "high significance" of values known only to those who brood upon "the purposes of a divine spiritual being"!

THE HUMANISTS SPEAK

In contrast with the "Christians" thus able to ignore the manifest course of western cultural history, the Humanists who addressed the Conference showed genuine constructive insight into the problems of modern society. Some passages from Mark Van Doren, of Columbia University, will serve to illustrate their position. He writes of

> the emergency which consists of our not knowing what we mean when we use the words man, human, and humane. Not that there has ever been a ready answer to the immemorial question, What is man? But there have been times when the question was taken with a degree of seriousness sufficient to guarantee that all thought was directed to its answer as an end. . . .
>
> Even a partial answer to the question would help us now—not so much to decide which of the currently contending programs is most human, as to see that none of them is at all, at least in the large sense that is demanded. For these programs are limited to the future, whereas the truth about man and the world is always present. . . .

RETURN TO REASON

> The religion which everyone is said to be seeking is not around the corner; philosophy will not establish a subject matter tomorrow; poetry cannot at once begin to reveal the human treasure which by its

current showing it does not even remember; and science should not be expected to temper itself over a week-end. But the knowledge must be recovered. And towards this end there must be more than lip-service to unity while the disciplines continue their rush into that darkness where finally, of course, there will be no discipline at all. There is only one center for discipline, and that is our definition of man in the world which eternally is. The definition is so difficult that the chief danger ahead may be glib answers and premature formulas. Doubtless we do not want formulas at all, or even answers if they do not provoke further questions, elucidating the ineradicable ironies of existence. Nor will any sensible person suppose that no more catastrophies will happen to mankind; there was the Peloponnesian War after Greece's great century. But meanwhile we have a job to do, and it can be done now as well as at any time. It is to bring all questions back to their source in that one part of us which is relevant, namely our reason. And it is to insist that all of the disciplines have a direct responsibility in the matter. What literature lacks, what religion lacks, what science lacks, what philosophy lacks, is one and the same thing; and all will be sound again when it is repossessed.

Mr. Van Doren's paper was among the shortest submitted at the Conference. It was also one of the best.

Balance in Nature

Karma, as "an undeviating and unerring tendency in the Universe to restore equilibrium," is the principle upon which all scientific knowledge depends. Every scientific law is an application or partial expression of Karma, and the more comprehensive the formulation of the law, the more closely it resembles the universal Theosophical statement. At present this is most evident from the study of physics, but as the other sciences progress, their laws, too, will be seen to relate to the one underlying principle. In Biology, the expression, "balance in nature," illustrates the rule of the law of equilibrium. A recently discovered instance of the delicate adjustments of this natural balance is provided by a study of the social life of ants. Dr. Robert E. Gregg, zoologist of the University of Chicago, after experimenting with almost 10,000 ants, found that

> when the soldier class was too large its numbers automatically diminished. And so it was with the workers. . . .
>
> It is not the colony that decides how many soldiers or workers are needed but the situation; in other words, the environment. This is important, if verified by others, because it is now supposed that the kind of food eaten by an ant settles the question of its caste. Dr.

> Gregg saw to it that the food supplied to his colonies did not vary in quantity. He does not think it likely that differences in the amount of food consumed by an ant can have any effect on the determination of its caste. (New York *Times,* Sept. 21.)

"Social Hormone"

Here is no question of "automatic" reaction to environment, although Dr. Gregg suggests that "environment," and not the colony, makes the decision. Following usual scientific procedure, he searched for some mechanism of control, finding, according to the *Times* account,

> a body exudate which the workers can change in volume and thus bring about physical changes. The exudate is distributed to the larvae by grooming nurses. . . . He calls the exudate a "social hormone."

Discovery of this mechanism no more "explains" the principle by which the social balance of the ant community is maintained than modern studies of the endocrine glands explain how physiological hormones govern the metabolic processes of the human or animal body. Dr. Gregg's analogy of hormones, however, interestingly suggests the organic unity of the society of ants, although it would probably be more accurate to call this unity psychic or "astral." In fact, the whole problem of insect societies raises interesting questions about the apparent "individuality" of single members of animal species. Is an ant a complete unit, or should it be regarded as simply a part, an organ, a limited function, within the total organization of the community?

Efficiency or Freedom?

Again, why do the perfections of social organization among ants and other insects excite the admiration of human beings, while the suggestion of a similar efficiency among humans, as might be obtained by the same means, arouses a deep repugnance? In his *Brave New World,* Aldous Huxley describes the production of different classes of men, *Alphas, Betas,* etc., according to formula, much as the ants determine their progeny. The normal reader reacts to this "eugenic" fantasy with a wave of revulsion; any such predestination of physical and psychic characteristics outrages an essential intuition of human beings. Actually, Mr. Huxley's *Brave New World* is more of a "hell" than any of Dante's nether world conceptions.

While scientists may study ants to learn the secrets of organic differentiation and social process, Theosophists see in these facts a field for the observation of states of *consciousness.* The Theosophical classification of animals is by hierarchies of intelligence, unlike the

scientific divisions in terms of external form and function. H. P. Blavatsky writes in *Isis Unveiled* (I, 433-4):

> The ant, with its wonderful architectural, social, and political abilities, is inexpressibly higher in the scale than the subtile royal tiger watching its prey. "With awe and wonder," exclaims du Bois-Raymond, "must the student of nature regard that microscopic molecule of nervous substance which is the seat of the laborious, constructive, orderly, loyal, dauntless soul of the ant!"

"Superior" Animal Intelligence

In *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 120), she speaks of the ant's intelligence as "animal consciousness of a superior kind." Respecting the "intellect" of the ant, she adds (*Transactions*, 13-14):

> Now, in relation to its own plane of conception and perception, the ant has as good an intellect as we have ourselves, and a better one; for though it cannot express it in words, yet, over and above instinct, the ant shows very high reasoning powers, as all of us know. . . .
>
> If a scientist could become an ant for a while, and think as an ant, and remember his experience on returning to his own sphere of consciousness, then only would he know something for certain of this interesting insect. As it is, he can only speculate, making inferences from the ant's behavior.

She indicates the danger of analyzing the ant's behavior on the basis of our own experience by saying that the ant's conceptions of space and time are "entirely on another plane" and thus quite different from ours. Later on in the *Transactions* H. P. B. points out:

> The ant and ourselves possess different degrees of perception. We are on a higher scale of evolution than the ant, but, comparatively speaking, we are the ants to the plane above.

Faults In Progressive Education

The prestige of "progressive" education is on the wane because at last its failure to educate the child with any thoroughness is being recognized. For years the Progressives have advocated that children be allowed to do things the easy way, that teachers conform to the desires and natural tendencies of the child instead of trying to teach unliked subjects or lessons. The progressive movement was a reaction to the deadening effects of mechanical indoctrination, and on the surface it seemed good; actually it went to the other extreme and fostered the natural playfulness in children, catering to their whims, without much thought as to the need for disciplined thinking.

One critic of Progressivism, Dr. Mary I. Preston, of Stanford University, holds "streamline education" responsible for the inability of the modern child even to *read:*

> Educators are now confronted with a school system whose channels are clogged throughout with thousands of these reading failures. Many of these students are of good or superior intelligence.
>
> In the home, where reading failure has been considered the mark of mental deficiency in the past, the reactions of the parents ran through worry, disapproval, irritation, nagging, anger, disgust, scorn, reproach, acid comparisons, deprivation of privileges and physical punishment. (Los Angeles *Herald-Express,* Oct. 8, 1940.)

"PHOTOGRAPHIC" READING

One progressive method of teaching reading shows words printed beside pictures. Instead of learning their ABC's, the children are taught to know a word as a whole by association with the picture portraying its meaning. As a result they are unable to learn a new word unless it is identified with a picture. Dr. Preston thinks this brings on personality maladjustments; children have reached high school and college without the ability to understand basic textbooks. Modern education also experiences difficulty in teaching mathematics. Mathematics is the chief cause of failure in New York high schools. (New York *Times,* Nov. 11, 1940.) Nineteen per cent of New York students fail to pass the mathematics courses. While mathematics is not taught as a "progressive" subject, the general laxity of progressive methods works against mastery of studies which require disciplined use of the mind.

FAITHLESSNESS OF YOUTH

Writing in *The Christian Century* for Jan. 22, 1941, Angus H. MacLean reviews the moral crisis in education. Approving the ideas of Drs. Hutchins and Adler of the University of Chicago, he says:

> Our youth, according to Adler, have repudiated the very idea of moral or spiritual truth. What is not objectively verifiable in the narrow scientific sense is not truth at all. Truth to them fits into a neat formula trailed by a Q.E.D., is measured by a ruler of its statistical equivalent. . . . A moral principle, although backed by the wisdom of the ages and sages alike, has no more validity than the chance opinion of the simplest freshman. College youth is without faith, without moral conviction, and altogether alarmingly deficient in the experiences of value, the sentiments and loyalties upon which any society must depend in a crisis.

Mr. MacLean points out that the academic vocabulary is full of *"ethically sterile words"* such as "efficiency, scientific, objectivity, frame of reference, and ideology." Terms connoting moral values are conspicuously absent from the language of the learned, and many words that used to bear ethical meaning have suffered "devaluation" to the secular level.

"Vocabularies of Motives"

A modern psychologist, C. Wright Mills, of the University of Wisconsin, has made more detailed analysis of the trends of thought revealed by vocabulary. Writing on "Vocabularies of Motives" in the *American Sociological Review* for December, 1940, he shows that the general attitude of a culture is reflected in its vocabularies. Thus, "in many situations of contemporary America, conduct is controlled and integrated by *hedonistic* language. For large population sectors in certain situations, pleasure and pain are now unquestioned motives." The author suggests that there is no reason to assume that pleasure and pain are absolute principles of conduct which should be "imputed to human nature as underlying principles of action." He advocates rather that history be studied in order to discover the dominant theme of motive in each epoch and society. Pointing out that pleasure and pain were not always "unquestioned motives," he notes that

> hedonism as a psychological and an ethical doctrine gained impetus in the modern world at about the time when older moral-religious motives were being debunked and simply discarded by "middle class" thinkers. Back of the hedonistic terminology lay an emergent social pattern and a new vocabulary of motives. The shift of unchallenged motives which gripped the communities of Europe was climaxed when, in reconciliation, the older religious and hedonistic terminologies were identified: the "good" is the "pleasant." The conditioning situation was similar in the Hellenistic world with the hedonism of the Cyrenaics and the Epicureans.

Unpleasant Facts

Mr. Mills finds several scheme of prevailing motivation in American life, as represented in use of the language. "In many sectors of twentieth-century urban America," he says, "individualistic, sexual, hedonistic, and pecuniary vocabularies of motives are apparently dominant." These animalistic motives are accompanied by a scepticism of anyone who claims to have a higher purpose in life. When a

medieval monk says that "he gave food to a poor but pretty woman" for the glory of God and his own salvation, we accuse him of sexual motives, not, says Mr. Mills, because we really know, but because "sex is an influential and widespread motive in our society and time." Those who disagree with us we charge with insincerity or ignorance. The Marxist, for instance, denounces as hypocrites other men who will not admit that their motives have an economic origin. The Freudian unearths hideous complexes which he attributes to other psychologists who will not accept the libido as the mainspring of all human endeavor. And so on, throughout all the partisanships of modern social life. The blueprint of motivation in America, as revealed in our use of language, does not make a pretty picture.

How Time Is "Spent" In America

E. L. Thorndike, a leader among contemporary psychologists, adds another dimension to the picture in his *Human Nature and the Social Order,* product of extensive research. According to a review in *Science* for July 12, 1940, Dr. Thorndike estimates that the 16 hours of the average waking day of adults in America are spent as follows: 30 per cent for entertainment, 25 per cent for subsistence and perpetuation, 10 per cent for companionship and affection, 10 per cent for approval, 8 per cent for the welfare of others, 7 per cent for security, and the rest of the time with miscellaneous pursuits, including *4 per cent for intellectual activity.* Man, the mind-being, spends only 1/25 of his waking life in reflective thought! Of course, Dr. Thorndike's figures are hardly infallible, but even with generous allowances for error in the wrong direction, his findings still cast a grim reflection on our "advanced" civilization, which has for its present task to think through and work out a solution for the worst political, social and moral mess known to history.

Body Electricity

That the vital functions of the human body, animals, and plants involve small currents of electricity has been recognized by physiologists since the development of sensitive recording instruments. All "living" things show a direct current flow, similar to that of a battery, which is fairly constant for any species. Each cell, moreover, has a small potential (energy) difference between the surface and the nucleus. Robert S. Schwab, of the Massachusetts General Hospital and the Harvard Medical School, discussing "body currents" in *Electrical Engineering* for October, 1941, likens the organic cell to a

small battery. There is strong evidence, he says, that the differing electrical potentials found in living organisms "are due to different metabolic rates or energy levels in different parts of the same structure." (See Lookout for September on metabolic gradients.) The discovery that electrical activity is always associated with "absorbing energy, growth, and change in structure" is clear indication of the master-pattern of organic life, which Theosophy explains as the electro-magnetic astral body.

Living "Switchboard"

One kind of body electricity is associated with locomotion. External or internal stimulation, Mr. Schwab says, produces "an astonishing change" in living tissue. As the tissue responds to the stimulus, an alternating current is set up, as in the motion of the muscles and nerves. Another kind of electricity is produced by the heart, which sends out waves periodically. The central nervous system has its own electrical activity:

> Here, as the function is continuous during life, the ganglia and brain cell tissues are ever-active electrically and show no periods of rest in the manner of muscle and nerve. Each brain cell does not actually beat alone, but by a system of interconnections keep each other stimulated to activity. These "chains" of neurones make up the bulk of the brain and spinal cord of man and animals. According to Herrick, in man, for example, there are over $10^{2,783,000}$ possible neuronal combinations—a number far greater than the total sum of all atoms in the entire solar system, 10^{76}.

The extraordinary complexity of these neural processes is described by Madame Blavatsky in "Psychic and Noëtic Action" (Theosophy XXVIII, 260).

Heart and brain waves are proving useful in the study of diseases, different patterns being produced by different bodily ills. Mr. Schwab illustrates the typical wave patterns which accompany coma, epilepsy, and other ailments. (For further discussion of brain waves, see Theosophy XXIII, 325; XXV, 470; XXVIII, 375.)

Sleep and Death

During the sleep of the body, the brain wave pattern changes: "Irregularity and increased voltage are characteristic. Response of the individual to outside stimulus is greatly prolonged." This would seem to indicate that whatever activity is proceeding on inner planes, it is but remotely connected with the body. A study of the relation between dreaming and the brain, as discussed in *Transactions,* pp. 63-5, will throw light on this difficult subject. Possibly the variation

of these waves during sleep reflects somewhat mechanically the perceptions of the dream world. "There is," says H. P. Blavatsky, "a sort of conscious telegraphic communication going on incessantly, day and night, between the physical brain and the inner man."

The heart waves, regular and rhythmic throughout life, become weak and slow as death approaches, ceasing soon after the heart stops beating. However, the waves continue faintly for several minutes after apparent death, and in one instance, after stopping, several beats more were recorded a little over half an hour later. Thus, the body does not die all at once, as Theosophy has taught. (See THEOSOPHY VI, 484; *Isis Unveiled* I, 482-5.) Brain waves at death, being of an irregular nature, are harder to interpret. In the death recorded, regularity was followed by relative inactivity, then irregularity (showing a coma) prevailed for several hours. As actual death approached, the rhythm became faster, and at the last moment there was a burst of intense activity lasting but a short time. Soon after, the brain wave pattern subsided.

SOUL-ACTIVITY AT DEATH

What happens at death from the viewpoint of consciousness is described in the *Ocean of Theosophy:*

> The breath leaves the body and we say the man is dead, but that is only the beginning of death; it proceeds on other planes. When the frame is cold and eyes closed, all the forces of the body and mind rush through the brain, and by a series of pictures the whole life just ended is imprinted indelibly on the inner man not only in a general outline but down to the smallest detail. . . . At this moment, though every indication leads the physician to pronounce for death and though to all intents and purposes the person is dead to this life, the real man is busy in the brain, and not until his work there is ended is the person gone (p. 99).

As to the length of the review at death, H. P. B. says in the *Key to Theosophy:*

> For one short instant the *personal* becomes one with the *individual* and all-knowing *Ego*. But this instant is enough to show to him the whole chain of causes which have been at work during his life (p. 162).

WHAT IS ELECTRICITY?

Theosophy has always held that matter is electrico-magnetic in essence. The evolution of the universe is likewise an electrical process, if we expand our idea of electricity to include the creative activities of mind. Says H. P. B.:

> Some faint idea of the nature of Fohat may be gathered from the appellation "Cosmic Electricity" sometimes applied to it; but to the commonly known properties of electricity must, in this case, be added others, including intelligence. It is of interest to note that modern science has come to the conclusion, that all cerebration and brain-activity are attended by electrical phenomena. (*S. D.* I, 85.)

So long ago as 1888, Science suspected that brain activity has electrical correlations, but only after many years have the majority of scientists acknowledged the electrical character of all living processes. The old notion of the impenetrability of matter is now discarded, and as the real nature of electricity is admittedly unknown, those who would learn more of Nature's secrets will have to turn to the occult teachings for the key to these great questions.

Even Dogs Know Better

Those aware of the effect of alcohol on the human system, causing a temporary separation between the Real Man, or Soul, and its instrument, will appreciate the following extract from an article by Albert Payson Terhune, which appeared in the November, 1941, *Reader's Digest:*

> There was something almost psychic . . . about the big auburn dog. When I was eating in the dining room he always lay in his corner, his eyes on me. But when I chanced to be drinking there he would get up quietly after my second or third drink and leave the room, to the merriment of guests who had seen him do it before. I was not in the least drunk (!), but he seemed to note and resent a subtle change in me that no human could have seen. If I called him, he came back instantly and stood at my side, head and tail adroop as if in shame, awaiting my orders. But as soon as my attention was turned he would go out again; nor come in except at my command, and then only for a moment.

In other words, the dog felt that his real master was no longer present.

A Journalist's Credo

Manchester Boddy, editor and publisher of the Los Angeles *Daily News,* provided the readers of his Thanksgiving Day "Views of the News" with some ideas that reveal a more than superficial acquaintance with the Law of Karma. He gives "thanks" for the very things that most men above all attempt to avoid:

> *I mean the "checks and balances"—the* obstacles*—that constantly arise and block, or delay, my eager, impetuous rush along the road*

that leads toward life objectives. Perhaps they would be more easily recognized if I called them simply the compensations *of failure—or success.*

I am thankful for these, not because they belong exclusively to myself, for they do not, but because they are part of all human life. The lame, the halt, the blind, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak—all alike experience compensation; all come to know that the "peak" of success, like the "depth" of failure, is mere illusion. To arrive at true values one must apply the sound rule of book-keeping: "What you have—less the cost of getting it." *In one way or another you get what you pay for, and you pay for what you get.*

"DYNAMIC LIFE"

I am thankful for this because it enables me to "view the news" without becoming emotionally upset over the victories and defeats of men and movements in the social, economic and political life of the nation. When I see an organization acquire great power I think of the tremendous responsibility it has assumed; of how quickly and completely it will be destroyed unless it *wisely* discharges that responsibility.

Men—organizations of men—"institutions"—and "movements" are but manifestations of dynamic life; these "manifestations" trace lines that rise and fall, circle and flatten out on the chart of time, but life itself is complete and unchanging—an inexhaustible fountain that feeds the soul of man with true satisfaction that alone can render him immune from the horrors of man-made hell on earth.

I am thankful for life.

Rather than a Thanksgiving Day "Prayer," Mr. Boddy's article is a testament of faith. One wishes his utterance might have had another occasion than the Christian holiday set apart for adoration of a personal God, yet the lack of any reference to that Personage is a great relief. Possibly the sound common sense of this statement will lead some readers to wonder how the "law of compensation" can work, unless reincarnation is part of the process.